

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2378

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR, US, OAS

SUBJ: SECRETARY'S LATIN AMERICAN TRIP

1. APRIL 5 LA OPINION CARRIES HERIBERTO KAHN BYLINED ARTICLE DISCUSSING UNFAVORABLE IMPACT THAT POSTPONEMENTS OF SECRETARY'S TRIP IS HAVING BOTH ON US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS AND ON SECRETARY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES. KAHN, WHO HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, WRITES THAT ARGENTINE DIPLOMATIC SOURCES ARE PRIVATELY SYMPATHETIC TO PRESSURES SECRETARY FACES IN INDOCHINA AND IN SECRETARY'S AND PRESIDENT FORD'S RELATIONS WITH CONGRESS. SOURCES ADD, HOWEVER, THAT SERIES OF POSTPONEMENTS AND "PROBABILITY" THAT SECRETARY WILL NOT VISIT LATIN AMERICAN BEFORE MAY 8 OASGA WILL EXACT A TOLL ON US-GOA CURRENTLY GOOD RELATIONS.

2. TO DATE, SOURCES ADD, EXCELLENT RAPPORT BETWEEN VIGNES AND THE SECRETARY HAVE ALLOWED ARGENTINA TO PLAY POSITIVE ROLE IN SERVING AS INTERLOCUTOR BETWEEN US AND LA AND IN FURTHERING NEW DIALOGUE. IN ADDITION, VIGNES STANDING IN THE CABINET HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED BY HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SECRETARY. ALL THESE FAVORABLE FACTORS ARE BEING ERODED BY THE POSTPONEMENTS WHICH IN THEMSELVES MAY CONSTITUTE A "NEW IRRITATING FACTOR" IN INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

COMMENT: KAHN TOLD EMBOFF PRIVATELY THAT SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ARE INDEED SYMPATHETIC TO SECRETARY'S PROBLEMS IN OTHER AREAS. HOWEVER THEY FEEL THAT POSTPONEMENTS

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HAVE EFFECT OF UNDERSCORING "LOW PRIORITY" US PLACES ON

RELATIONS WITH LA. BECAUSE THESE OFFICIALS ARE PUBLICLY
IDENTIFIED WITH EFFORT TO MAINTIAN AND IMPROVE GOOD RELATIONS
WITH US, THEIR OWN PERSONAL STANDING WITH GOA WILL BE DAMAGED
IF SECRETARY DOES NOT COME SOON. EMBOFFS HAVE RECIEVED
SIMILAR ANALYSIS FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTACTS IN RECENT
DAYS.
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